

Memorandum



Date: September 23, 2019

To: Doris Sims, Director of Housing and Neighborhood Development

CC: Eric Sader, Assistant Director of Housing and Neighborhood Development

From: Sean Rohrer, Housing and Community Development Specialist

RE: Consolidated Plan Needs Assessment

Stakeholder meetings were conducted on June 11th and 12th. Stakeholders consisted of residents and organizations that are familiar with, or interested in, Bloomington's housing and community development needs. Additionally, there was a survey open for several weeks that gathered data on the public's sentiment on community needs. The needs identified through these outreach processes will serve as the basis for the Consolidated Plan Needs Assessment. The following needs were identified as having the highest priority:

- affordable housing in the rental and sales markets,
- public facilities and infrastructure,
- public services,
- housing and services for persons experiencing homelessness, and
- economic development.

The lack of affordable housing received the most attention in both stakeholder interviews and the survey. In the survey, 170 of the 261 responses listed affordable housing as the City's highest priority over the next five years. Stakeholders stated that Bloomington's housing market is faced with high demand from students which has caused both rental and sale prices to increase faster than wages. There are also concerns that new rental housing is being built for students rather than long-term residents. For this reason, the City has a need for increased housing supply and housing affordability programs.

Stakeholders expressed a need for public facilities and infrastructure spending. Public transportation was a topic that was important to many stakeholders. They deemed public transportation does not run frequently enough to provide a substantial benefit to low-income and elderly residents who depend on it for access to jobs and amenities like grocery stores and health care. In the survey, public transportation was listed as the highest priority item among public infrastructure initiatives. Sidewalk improvements was also listed among the top priorities for public infrastructure initiatives and neighborhood or commercial district improvements.

Several public services programs were indicated as priority needs. Stakeholders expressed a need for more neighborhood community centers that provide services like internet access as well as public

meeting space. As a City with a number of neighborhoods with different levels of infrastructure available, some neighborhoods will need these facilities built from the ground up, which falls under the category of public facilities. Other neighborhoods have the infrastructure available and need their services funded, which is categorized as a public service. This distinction is important due to the cap placed on public services funding. The success of neighborhood associations with public meeting space was listed as an example of why more neighborhood community centers would be beneficial to low-income neighborhoods. The most often cited public service need in stakeholder meetings was affordable childcare.

Housing services for homeless persons, domestic violence victims, and youth transitioning out of foster care was discussed as a priority in both stakeholder meetings and the survey. Many stakeholders discussed the difficulties in getting many of these individuals into stable housing. One stakeholder said there is only one or two landlords willing to take on formerly homeless or addicted persons as tenants. The survey listed domestic violence and youth foster care transition as the top two priorities in this category.

Stakeholders made the connection between lack of affordable housing and the need for more stable, good paying jobs. Job creation and retention were the highest priority economic development items in the survey. Job training and job creation were two high priority items viewed as possibilities to achieve economic development that would ease pressure on housing affordability.